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DEFENSE FOR FATA, BEIN
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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [BK](#)
SUBJECT: BOSNIA - SPIRIC SEEKS DISMISSAL OF ALKALAJ,
CRNADAK AND SEPIC

Classified By: Michael J. Murphy. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (SBU) On April 24, the Bosnian Central Election Commission (BHEC) found three members of the Council of Ministers (CoM) -- Foreign Minister Sven Alkalaj, Deputy Defense Minister Igor Crnadak, and Deputy Civil Affairs Ministers Senad Sepic -- in violation of the Law on Conflict of Interest in Governmental Institutions. (Note: Alkalaj is a member of Haris Silajdzic's Party for BiH, Crnadak of the Party for Democratic Progress, and Sepic of the Party for Democratic Action. End Note) The law, imposed by OHR in 2002, contains some of the strongest prohibitions on conflict of interest issues in the region. It proscribes a wide variety of conflict of interest actions for officials, their direct family members, and even "relatives in the indirect line up to the third degree and in-laws up the second degree." The BHEC found that Alkalaj violated provisions of the law that prohibited public officials from sitting on the board of companies that contract with the government, while Crnadak and Sepic each had family members that sat on the boards of publicly owned companies. Article 20 of the law declares that officials found in violation are "ineligible to stand for any directly or indirectly elected office for a period of four years following the finding of the violation." Removal of a minister or deputy minister sanctioned by the BHEC is governed by the Law on the Council of Ministers, which requires such a decision to be taken by parliament upon recommendation by the Chairman of the CoM.

12. (C) On May 5, Prime Minister Spiric forwarded to parliament a recommendation that it remove Alkalaj, Crnadak and Sepic for violations of the Law on the Conflict of Interest. Spiric's move came as a surprise, since other high-ranking SNSD officials, including Serb member of the Tri-Presidency Radmanovic and staff from the office of Republika Srpska PM Milorad Dodik, had privately suggested to us that SNSD had no intention of "going after" Alkalaj, Crnadak or Sepic. Spiric's Chief of Staff, Gordana Zivkovic, told us that Spiric had changed his mind on the issue and decided that the dismissals of the three senior officials were necessary to prove that Bosnia "was a country of laws not thieves." (Note: We were meeting with Crnadak earlier in the day on May 5 when Spiric called him to inform him that he would only request parliament's "position" on the conflict of interest issues. At the time, Crnadak thought that Spiric

was referring the matter to parliament for advice only to avoid taking a clear decision on the ministers' fate himself. End Note.) SNSD spokesman Rajko Vasic followed Spiric's announcement with a statement that the party supported Spiric's initiative. It is unclear when parliament will act on Spiric's proposal, but House of Representatives Speaker Beriz Belkic, a member of the Party for Bosnia (SBiH), told us that he would not allow the issue to be considered by parliament this week.

13. (C) COMMENT: It is unclear why Spiric chose to seek the three ministers' removal now given earlier signals from SNSD that the party was not interested in provoking a crisis within the ruling coalition over the BHEC decisions. The likely target is Alkalaj, with whom Spiric has had a terrible relationship. Though others in SNSD are also unhappy with Alkalaj, who is widely perceived as having politicized the MFA as Siljadzic's mouthpiece, it is unclear how much support Spiric has within the party hierarchy. Late in the day, a member of Radmanovic's staff confided to us that SNSD "would step in if things got ugly." This seems likely given the strong support Alkalaj enjoys from Siljadzic. Crnadak and Sepic are likely collateral damage. END COMMENT
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